IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with <u>underlining</u> and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 13 and 14 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended); A method for providing help information for a user in a speech dialog system for operating a background application,

the background application being modeled on principles P1 through P3:

P1) the background application can be interpreted as a finite set of transactions T1, T2, ..., Tn;

P2) each transaction has a finite set of parameters required to execute the transaction;

P3) each parameter has a grammar that serves to acquire a value for the parameter in a speech dialog;

the speech dialog system can assume at least the following states:

state a): no transaction has yet been selected, and the transactions T1, T2, ..., Ti are still possible;

state b): a transaction has been selected, but not all parameter values relating to this transaction have yet been input;

the method comprising:

storing a transaction prompt for each transaction;

storing a help prompt for each parameter;

a global help command to request help ; outputting a prompt corresponding to the state and context after detection of the global help command such that

at least one transaction prompt is output in the state a);

at least one help prompt is output in the state b)

defining substates for hierachiacal structuring of a help function associated with the help prompt, the substates being assigned to transactions or transactions and sub-substates; and

outputting, using the speech dialog systems, the sub-substates and transactions available in a respective sub-substate in the event of detection of the global help command, the sub-substates and transactions available being output ~~either~~ by a help prompt followed by an enumeration of transaction prompts ~~or by a question prompt and a transaction prompt~~.

2. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the help prompt stored for each parameter either enumerates all possible values of this parameter or specifies the form in which a value for the parameter is to be input.

3. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein after detection of the global help command in state a)
- either all possible transactions are output to with a global help prompt,
- or, by a question containing a transaction prompt, to be answered with "yes" or "no", the user is asked individually for each available transaction whether he wishes to execute this transaction .

4. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein
a global help prompt is stored; and
after uttering the global help command, a user is provided with possible options for state a) by a combination of the global help prompt and the transaction prompt.

5. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein an option prompt is stored and output with all values that are possible for a respective parameter.

6. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a grammar is stored for each possible user input.

7. (original): The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the available transactions are hierarchically ordered.

8. (original): The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein after detection of the global help command in state a)
- either all possible transactions are output to with a global help prompt,
- or, by a question containing a transaction prompt, to be answered with "yes" or "no", the user is asked individually for each available transaction whether he wishes to execute this transaction .

9. (original): The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein

a global help prompt is stored; and

after uttering the global help command, a user is provided with possible options for state a) by a combination of the global help prompt and the transaction prompt.

10. (original): The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein an option prompt is stored and output with all values that are possible for a respective parameter.

11. (original): The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein a grammar is stored for each possible user input.

12. (original): The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the available transactions are hierarchically ordered.

13. (currently amended):   A system for providing help information for a user in a speech dialog system for operating a background application,

the background application being modeled on principles P1 through P3:

P1) the background application can be interpreted as a finite set of transactions T1, T2, ..., Tn;

P2) each transaction has a finite set of parameters required to execute the transaction;

P3) each parameter has a grammar that serves to detect a value for the parameter in a speech dialog;

the speech dialog system can assume at least the following states:

state a): no transaction has yet been selected, and the transactions T1, T2, ..., Ti are still possible;

state b): a transaction has been selected, but not all parameter values relating to this transaction have yet been input;

the system comprising:

a memory to store a transaction prompt for each transaction and a help prompt for each parameter;

a detection unit to detect a global help command;

an output unit to output a prompt corresponding to the state and context, after detection of the global help command such that:

at least one transaction prompt is output in the state a); and

at least one help prompt is output in the state b) wherein

substates are defined for hierachiacal structuring of a help function associated with the help prompt, the substates being assigned to transactions or transactions and sub-substates, and

the output unit outputs the sub-substates and transactions available in a respective substate in the event of detection of the global help command, the sub-substates and transactions available being output either by a help prompt followed by an enumeration of transaction prompts or by a question prompt and a transaction prompt.

14. (currently amended): A method for providing help information to a user of a voice operated system that executes one of a plurality of transactions after the transaction has been identified and a value for each parameter associated with the transaction has been entered, comprising:

heiarchiacally structuring transactions using substates such that sub-substates are defined within a substate and transactions are defined within a substate;

receiving an oral command requesting help;

matching the oral command with a stored global help command;

determining a hierachiacal location of a user within a substate when the oral command is matched with the stored global help command;

outputting, using a speech dialogue system, the sub-substates and transactions available in a respective substate when the oral command is matched with the stored global help command, the sub-substates and transactions available being output either by a help prompt followed by an enumeration of transaction prompts or by a question prompt and a transaction prompt;

outputting at least one transaction prompt if the user has not identified the transaction; and

outputting at least one parameter help prompt if the user has identified the transaction, but has not entered a value for each parameter associated with the transaction.

15. (cancelled)